gothstuck

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ARTISTS

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OHEIC | cyansakii
CtySlckr | Jazz | Onigirlz
Geo Space | m0Orbid
spektorrose | Sollay B | hades
desta | TheSwordWizard
karkedkat | Len_designs
Apollo | Rainbowpui
Axollady | awolCarbonate
kripticlori | Naps
Cosmicpunk | SW4N
Lucasmiis | Seth
Arc_ada | zeldasoft
Audeytracks | duetland
piffydog | rinworms
FrankenFlora | clownvoid
Lordmemenglish
eelinfestation | indigoNite
omoulo | glubglubguppies
alittleminish | Neon

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plazynoodles *@ twitter*

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PHOTO EDITING

FunkMcLovin (Pg. 64/65)
plazynoodles (Pg. 66)

ORIGINAL ZINE CONCEPT

Neon *neonspirals @ twitter*

TYPEFACES

Blonde Fraktur
Pirata One
Vendetta OT

introduction

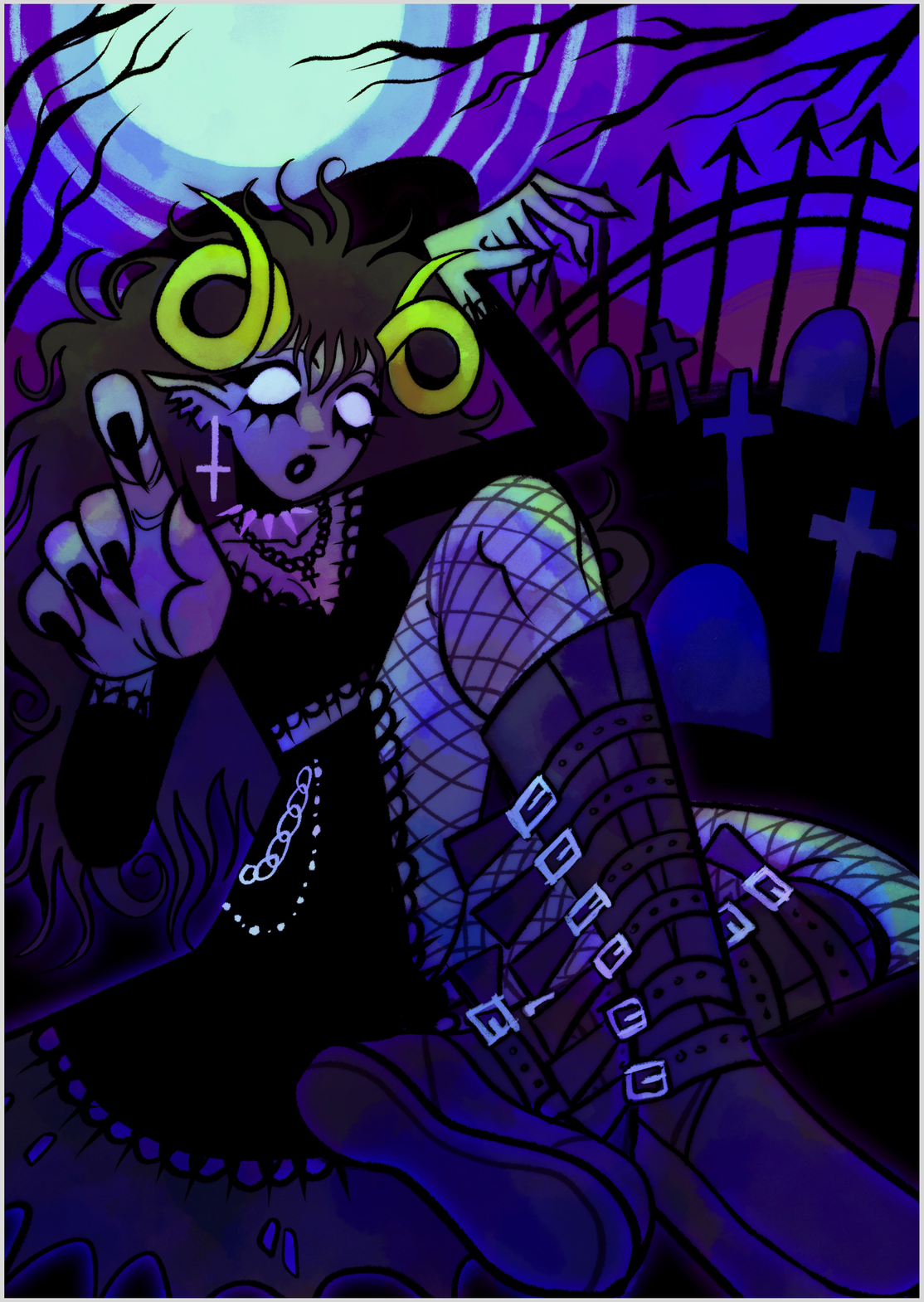
plazynoodles & FunkMcLovin

The Gothstuck Zine was created to highlight gothic themes seen throughout the work of Homestuck: from the imposing cathedrals and towering spires of the dark and light kingdoms of dreams to the eldritch horrorterrors that lurk in the murky pitch of the furthest ring. This atramentous zine has been hand-crafted for those select fans who savor delving into the gothic influence that has festered itself in many aspects of Homestuck, whether through literature, art, or both! The context of 'goth' culture, its philosophy, and its aesthetic transcends the barriers of species; Alternia boasts a gothic culture all on its own.

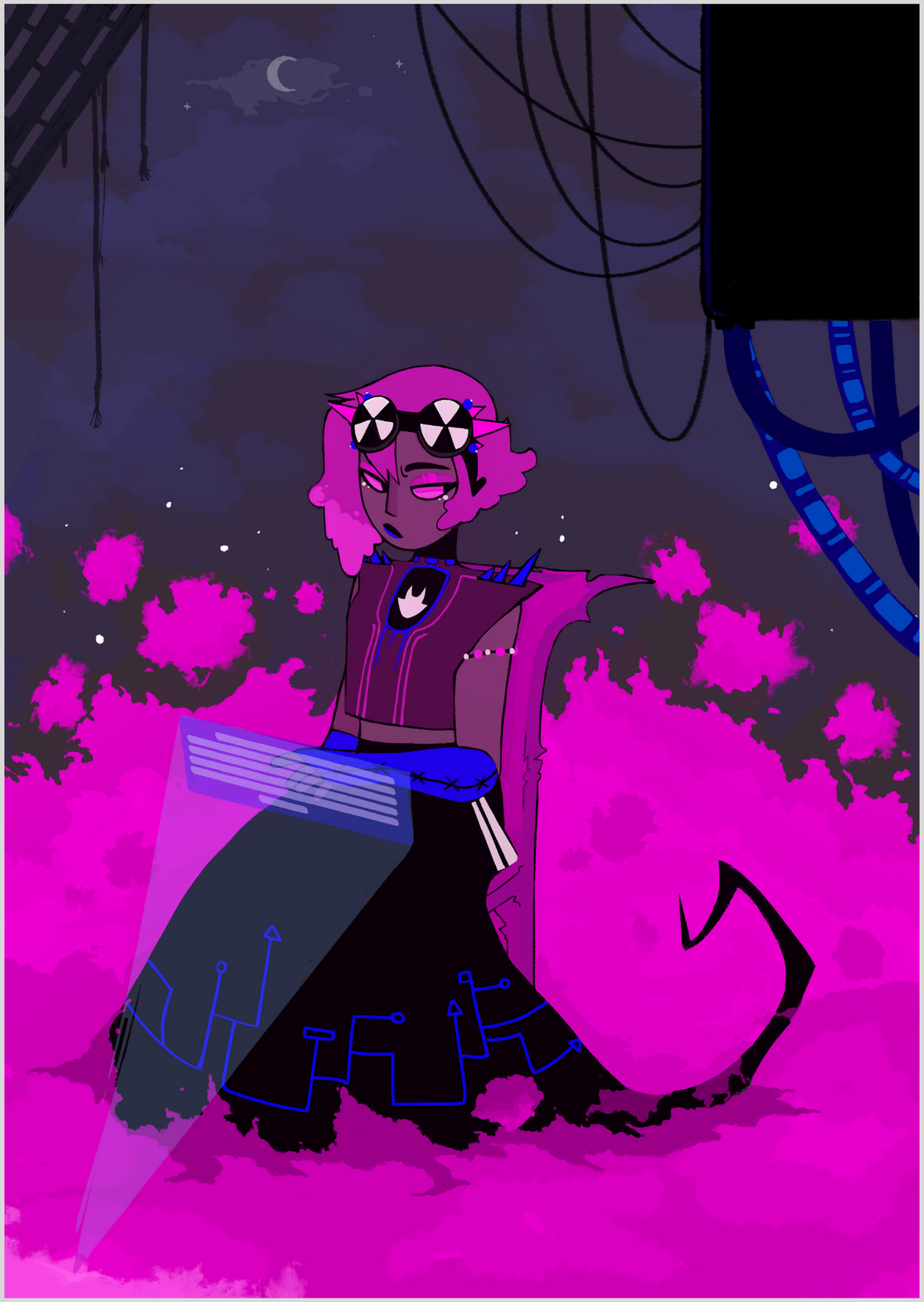
We at the Gothstuck Zine Team are proud to present a work that has been in development from November 2019 to April 2020, with over 40 contributions from talented artists, capable writers, and brilliant cosplayers. We sincerely hope you all enjoy what we have in store, goth lovers and Homestuck fans alike!



oso *gau__oso @ twitter / gauo-so @ tumblr*



stoneoceans @ twitter **st0neoceans**



OHEIC *OHEIC1 @ twitter*



cyansakii @ twitter, tumblr, instagram cyansakii



CtySlckr *cty.slckr @ instagram*



clown__supreme @ twitter **Jazz**



Onigirlz *onigirlz @ instagram*



8geospace @ instagram **Geo Space**



m0Orbid *moorbid @ twitter, instagram*



spektorrose @ twitter, instagram **spektorrose**



Sollay B *sollay6 @ twitter / sollay.b @ instagram*



underworld__arts @ instagram **hades**



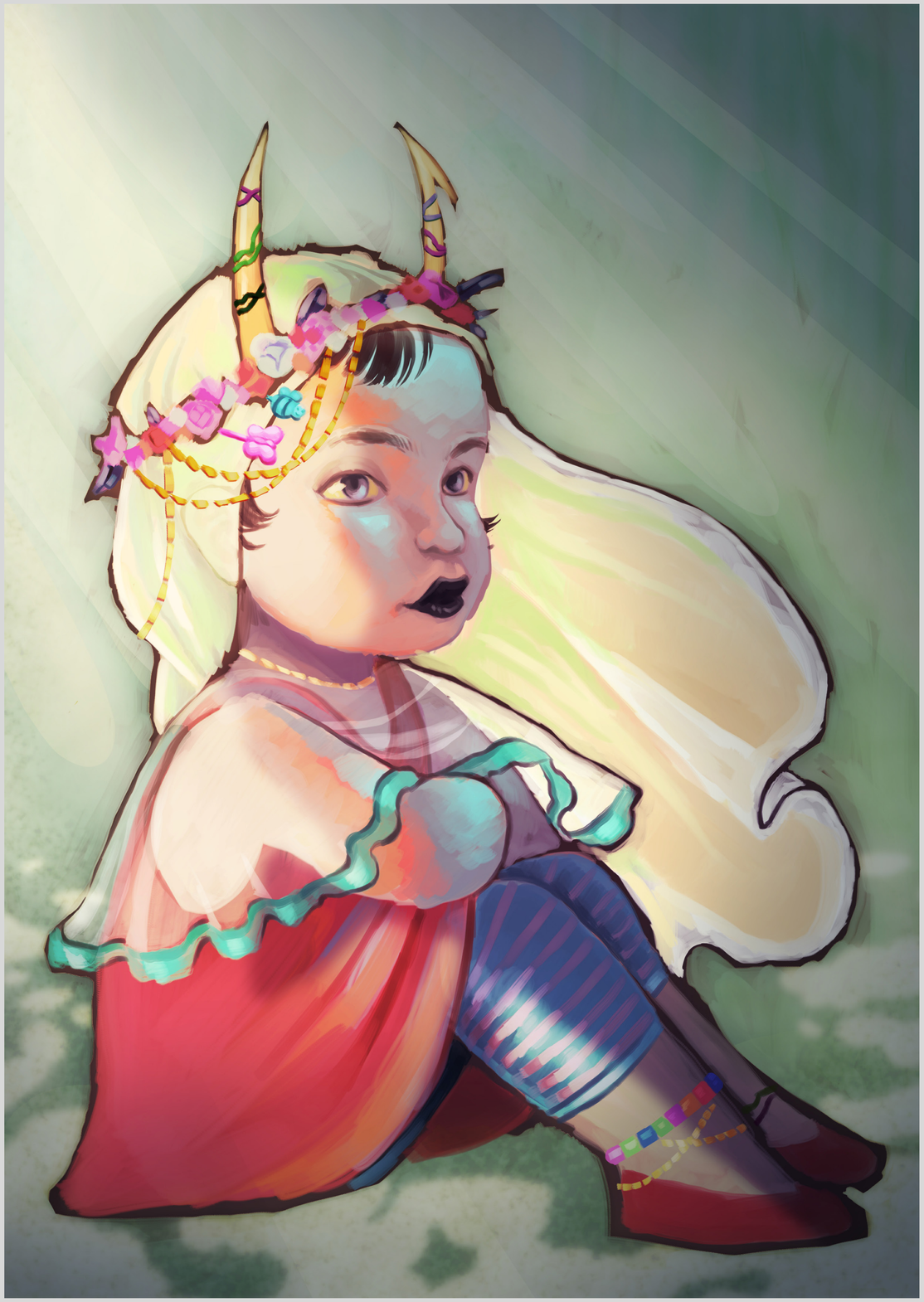
desta *mythuna @ twitter, tumblr*



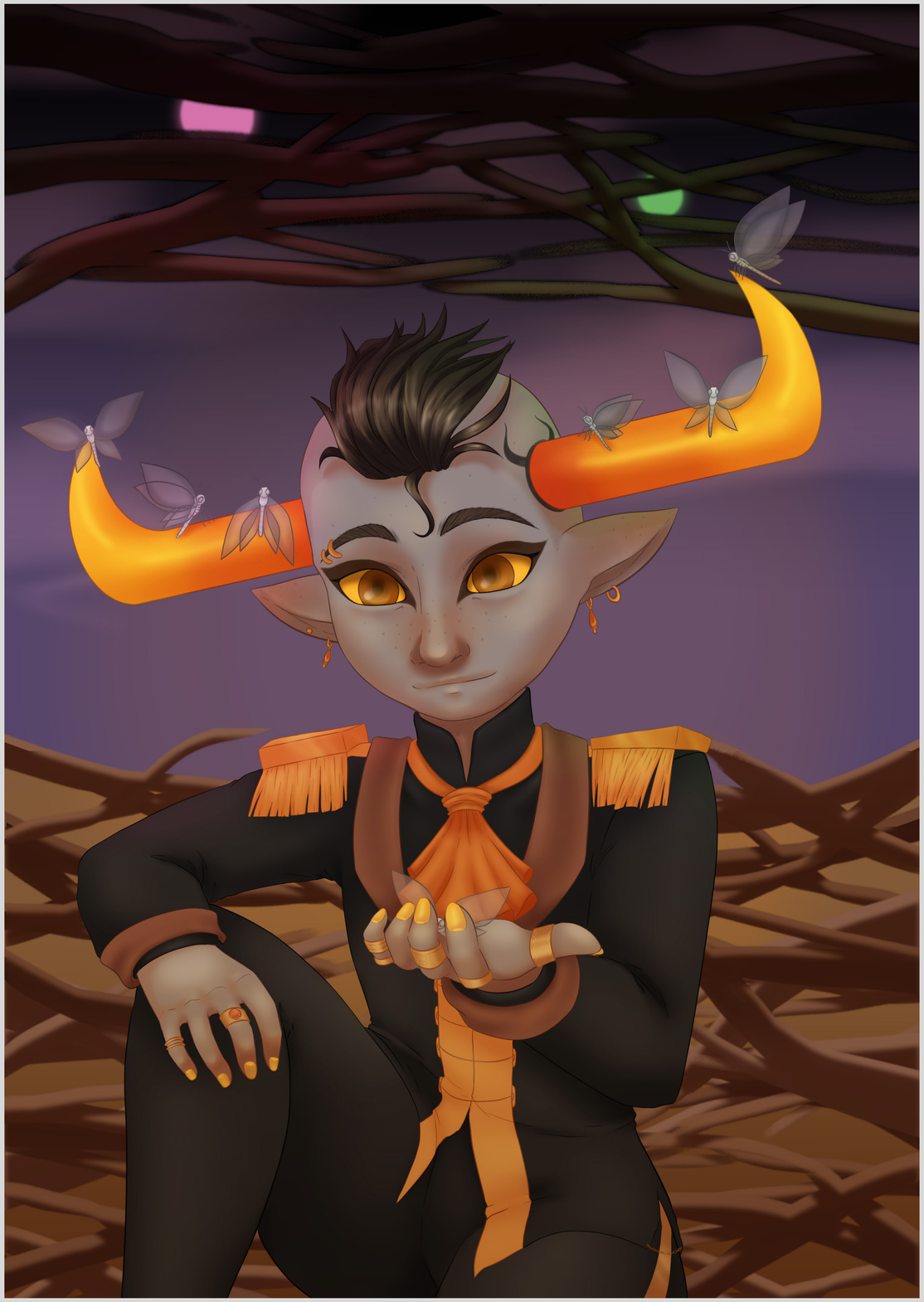
theswordwizard @ twitter **TheSwordWizard**



karkedkat *evandered @ tumblr*



Len__designs @ twitter **len_designs**



Apollo *xapollo96x @ twitter, instagram, tumblr*



rainbowpui @ tumblr **Rainbowpui**



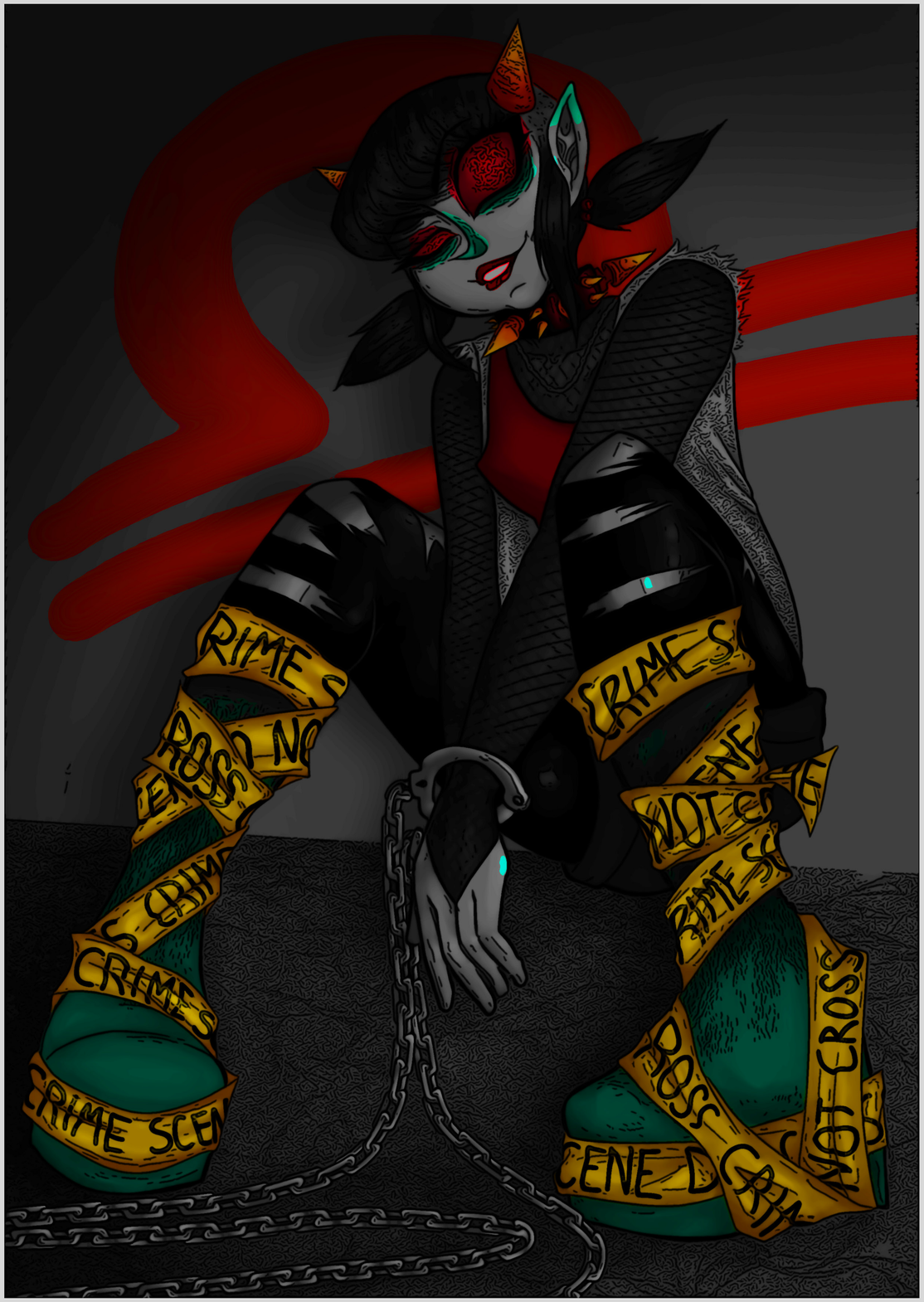
Axollady *axollady @ twitter, instagram, tumblr* Pg. 21



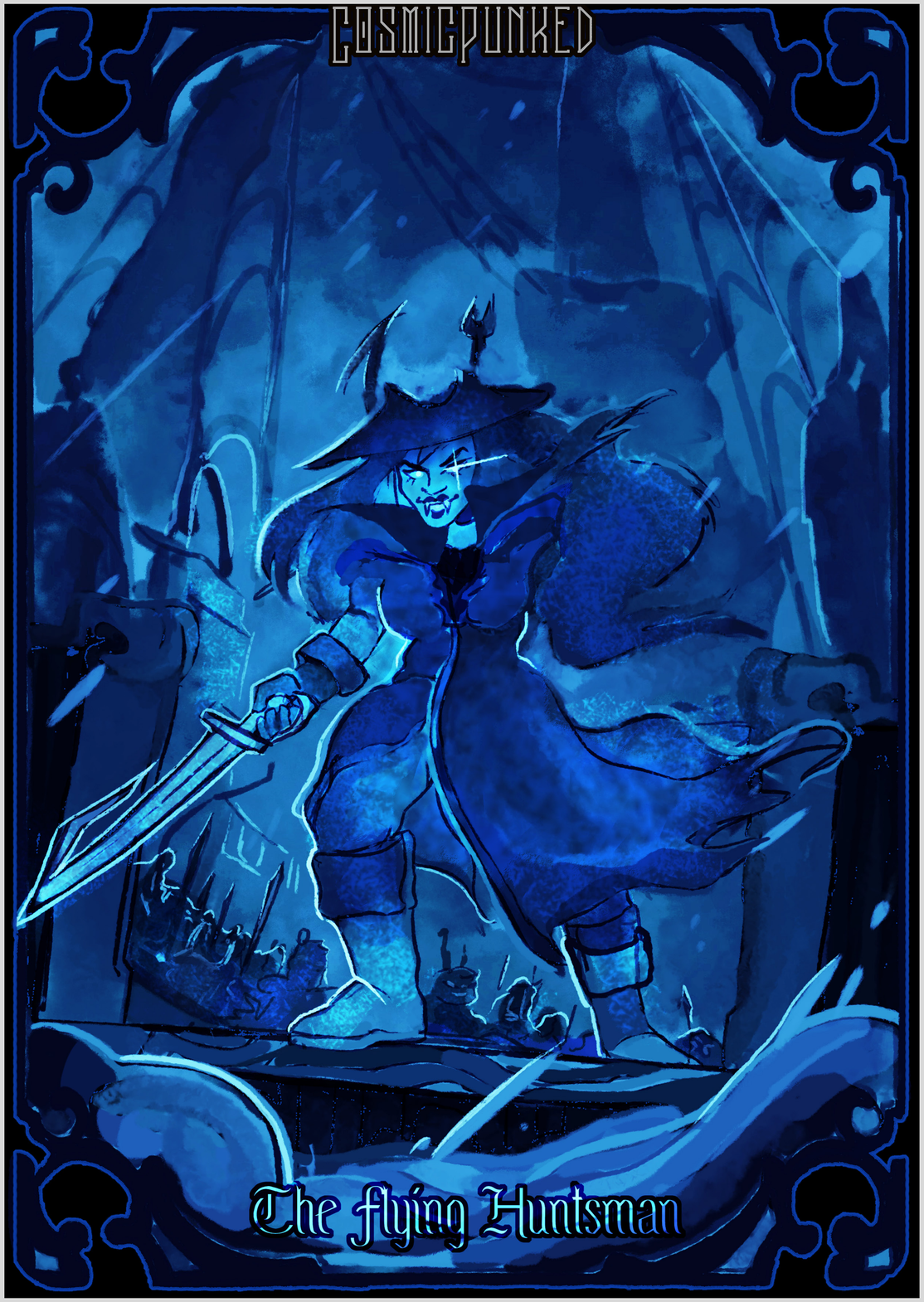
Pg. 22 *awolCarbonate @ twitter* **awolCarbonate**



kripticlori *kripticlori @ twitter*



mercilessnaps @ twitter, instagram **Naps**


COSMICPUNKED
The flying Huntsman


Reunion
COSMICPUNKED



SW4N *aswanisonfire @ twitter / sw4nfire @ instagram*



lucasmiis @ twitter, tumblr **Lucasmiis**


STAY.



Arc_ada *arc__ada @ twitter, instagram*



zeldasoft @ twitter, tumblr **zeldasoft**

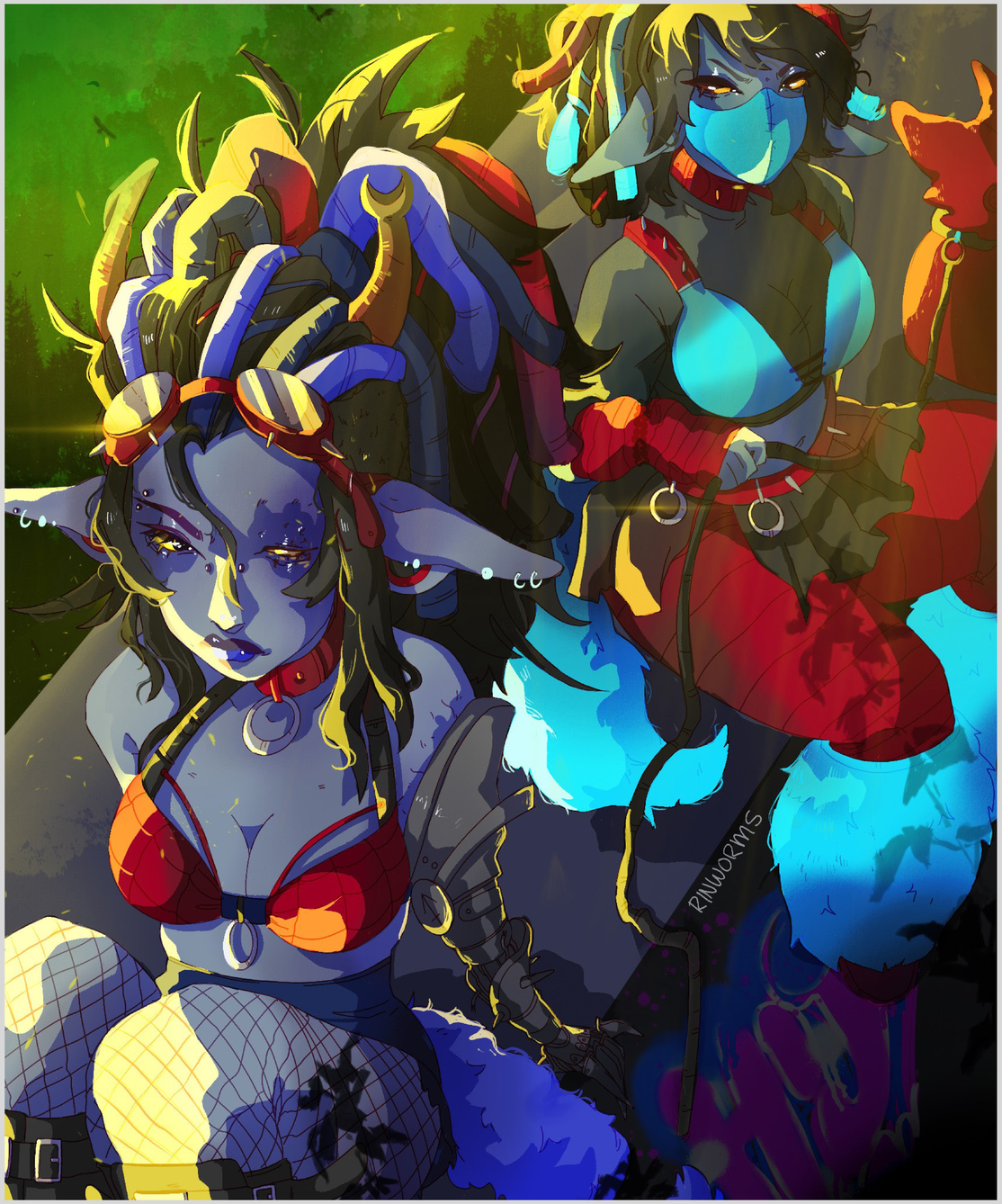


Audeytracks *audeytracks @ instagram*





piffydog *piffydog @ twitter, instagram, tumblr*



rinworms / lichlup @ instagram **rinworms**



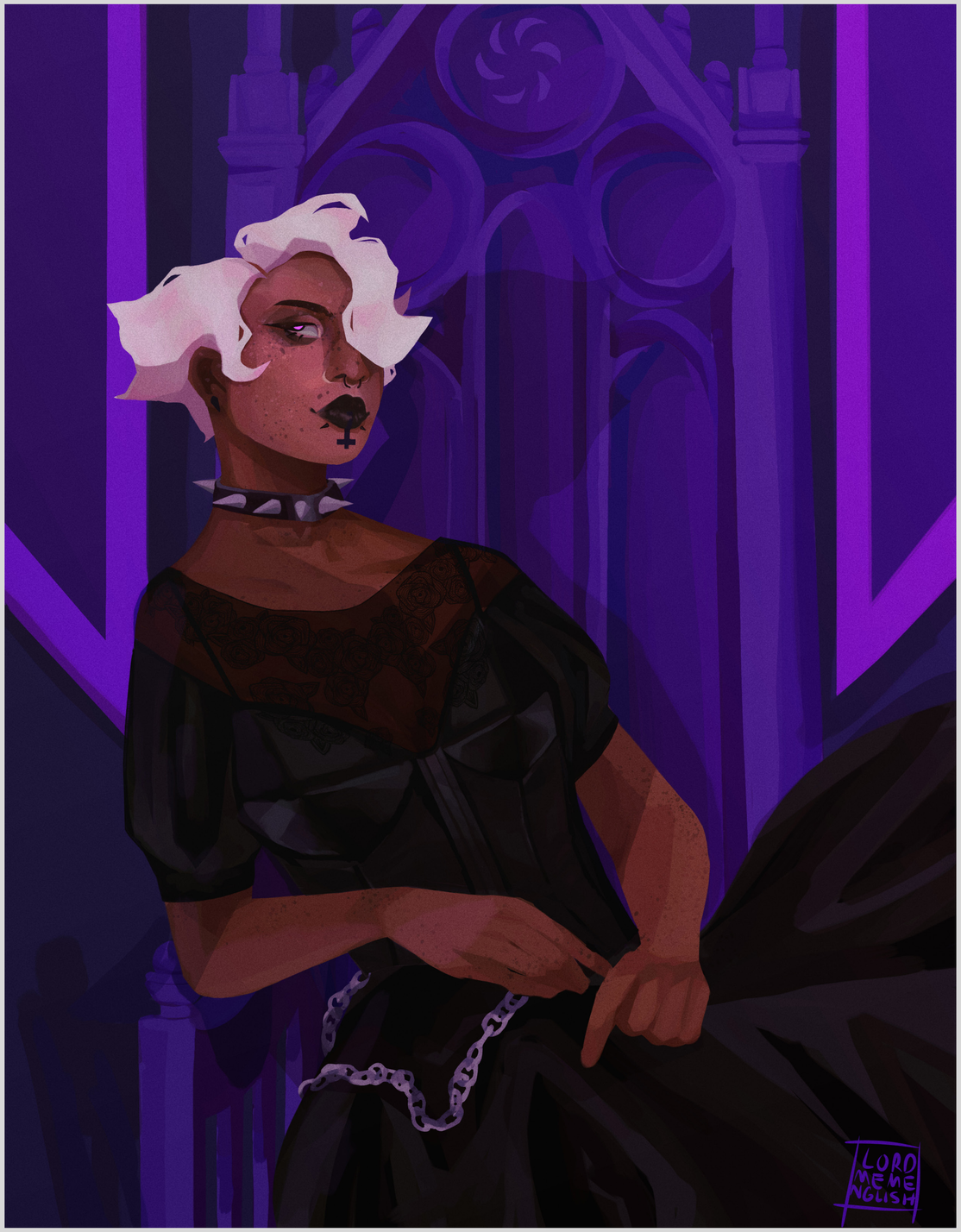
FrankenFlora *frankenflora @ twitter, tumblr*

Pg. 37



Pg. 38

clownvoid @ twitter **clownvoid**



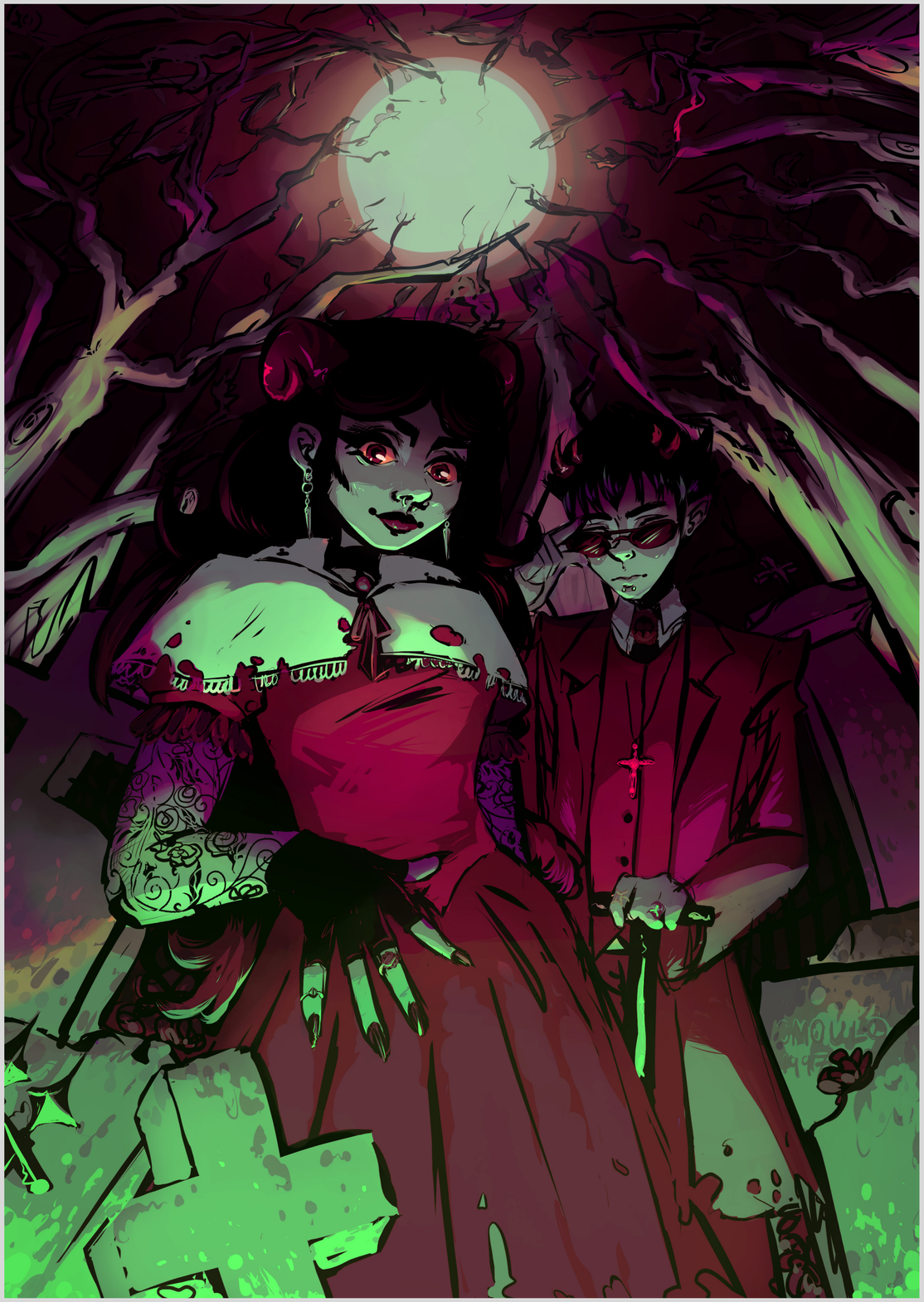


Lordmemenglish *lordmemenglish @ instagram*

 eelinfestation @ twitter **eelinfestation**



indigonite *indigonite0 @ twitter, instagram*



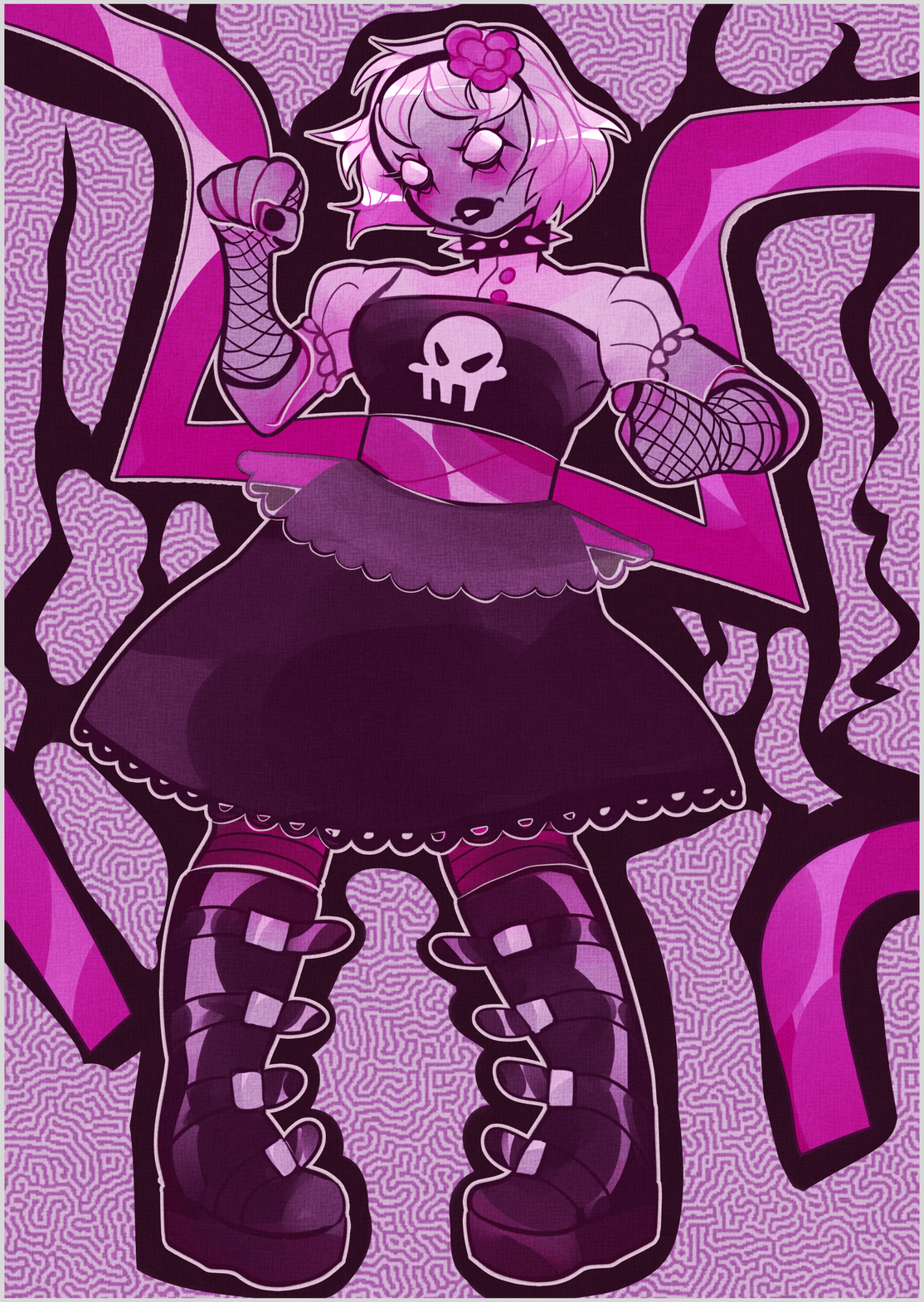
omoulo @ twitter, tumblr **omoulo**



glubglubguppies *glubglubguppies @ instagram*



alittleminish @ instagram **alittleminish**



Neon *neonspirals @ twitter*

Rose Traine

FunkMcLovin *FunkMcLovin @ twitter*

The ribbon cinched Rose's waist, causing the air to leave her chest. It was tight, but it didn't bother Miss Lalonde. The pressure was welcome, almost comforting, like a weighted blanket curled around her stomach. Cloth brushed against cloth, her feet leaving the ground, skirt whipping in the wind. Around her crackled slow strikes of black lightning, arcing from her in waves against the walls of her bedroom.

"Finally..." she whispered, a murmur in the din only she could hear. Rose's room was a tornado of chaos, books hurtling from the shelves, energy swirling around her, deep, dark pinks and blacks crackling and snapping, like she was made of electricity.
"Finally!" she repeated, her words rising above the tumult, her head cast skyward. "It worked!" she cried, like a woman possessed—for of course, she was.

"The power... The power!" she said, her usual verbosity lost in the face of the new arcane strength surging through her. "Finally, it is all mine! Ha!" Rose let loose a laugh. She so seldom laughed, it felt strange, so unhinged to let them spill forth, cackling like the witch she was.

"Muahahaha!" She laughed hard, head thrown back, arms widening beside her, raising slowly to the heavens. Her room was afire, now, wreathed in dark flame, torn asunder by—

Knock, knock.

"Hey, sweetie, supper's ready!"

A saccharine voice cut through the chaos like scissors through paper. Rose's laugh caught in her throat. The swirling maelstrom in her room stopped in an instant, her books and trinkets all falling to the ground.

"I made your favorite! Apple pie is for dessert, too."

Rose gawked at her bedroom door. In a reflex, a Pavlovian response, her face screwed up into a growling, pouty mask.

"Mooo-ooooom! Stop interrupting my dark communion with the ancient gods!"

The dinner table was long, almost comically so. It was more of a banquet table, really, stretching all the way down the high-ceilinged dining room the Lalondes occupied. Rose sat at one end and her mother sat down right next to her. Rose sighed, grumbling, wishing Miss Lalonde would get the hint and sit further away. As usual, Roxanne appeared to be blind to her daughter's irritation.

"So how's the, uh, dark magic rituals, sweetie?" asked Roxanne, digging in. The meal was meatloaf with no side dish. Roxanne sipped wine, Rose opted for water.

"They aren't rituals, mother," Rose said with an edge to her voice. "A ritual involves a sacrifice or a dance or something. This is summoning. You'd know the difference if you listened to me." Rose picked at the food. She wished her mother would stop trying to cook. Roxanne was awful at it; the meatloaf looked to be overcooked and underseasoned. Rose took a reluctant bite. At least it was edible.

"Right, right!" Roxanne replied, halfway finished with her meatloaf, pouring herself another glass of wine. She coughed, shifting in her seat. "Do you need any more candles or anything?"

Rose swallowed her meatloaf, eyes suddenly cast downwards at the table. She felt a little sheepish now. She did need more candles, but it felt strange to ask after she'd been so icy to her mother.

A mother shouldn't be supportive of Rose's work. A mother should be worried about their daughter if she was holed up in her room all day,

doing incantations. Moms were supposed to worry when daughters wore bleached hair, strapped boots to their knees, mothers should hate fishnet sleeves and garish skirts that made it hard to sit. Roxanne wasn't worried, she was happy for Rose, she was proud when Rose's eyes turned white and glowed with the power of malevolent forces. Mothers shouldn't support this. But here Roxanne was, asking Rose if she needed more candles.

"I could use a few more," Rose said softly.

"Okay! I'll pick some up on the way home tomorrow."

The rest of the meal was silent. Rose felt a familiar strangeness settle over her. She couldn't eat anymore. Surreal anger was rising in her, slowly boiling, teenage rage she didn't know the source of.

"How's the loaf, Rosie?" asked Roxanne, her voice untainted by strain, as though she couldn't read the room. The question was simple, but there was something about the innocence of Roxanne's voice that made Rose snap.

"Awful," growled Rose in a low voice. Roxanne's hand paused on the way to her mouth. Rose looked at her mother. She didn't know why, but she wished Roxanne would rise to the bait for once. She wished Roxanne would react. She hoped, for some perverse reason that her mother would finally snap and yell, or cry, or emote in any fashion other than the mild smile she always seemed to wear. It felt so phony to Rose, it felt false, and it hurt.

"Awful?" Roxanne repeated. Rose's breath made her chest heave.

"It's awful, mother. It's overcooked. Even I can tell, and I've never so much as touched the stove top. It doesn't even have any salt on it. Are you too stupid to season your food? Is that it?" Rose's breath was coming more quickly, adrenaline pulsing in her veins. She didn't know why it felt so right to lash out, why she felt so desperate, why her heart was beating like it was.

But in the face of Rose's bold, raw emotion, Roxanne just chuckled, putting the fork back down on her plate.

There was a sad look in Roxanne's eyes, but it was gone in an instant.
"Heh. You're probably right. I just don't want us eating all packaged stuff, y'know?" Roxanne took Rose's plate, walking to the kitchen, heels clacking on the marble, filling the enormous dining room with a dull echo. The kitchen door swung shut behind her.

Rose was stunned. Baffled. It was like Roxanne lived in another world. Rose felt something snap in her. She was mad. If Roxanne wouldn't rise to her jabs, she would make her. She pushed the chair back with an arcane push, the seat tipping back, sliding back across the floor. Rose stood, hovering an inch off the ground, her pupils disappearing into her scleras, shrouded in a dark aura. She would show her mother what dark magic rituals were.

Yes, this felt so right. Her mother wouldn't be able to ignore her like this. Roxanne couldn't turn away and flee into the kitchen. Rose was strong. The power of the elder gods flowed inside her body, and she would force her mother to show some other emotion, to break down that infuriating, heartbreaking mask she always wore. Rose floated to the kitchen door, wrenching it open.

Inside, Roxanne was hunched over the sink, shoveling meatloaf into the garbage disposal. It groaned under the strain of half an uneaten slab of crispy loaf so Roxanne ran the water. Over the din of the grinder, she hadn't noticed Rose enter, blind as usual to anything Rose did. Rose opened her mouth to speak just as the garbage disposal spun down, but a different sound emerged, a sound that made Rose's icy heart evaporate into steam.

Roxanne sniffled. She lingered over the sink for a moment, wiping her eyes with a sleeve, a single tear falling into the basin with a small, soft "plop." Roxanne's hands gripped the basin so tightly that her knuckles were white, arms shaking. She looked to be on the verge of tears, trying desperately to keep from breaking down.

"Fuck," Roxanne whispered, her body relaxing, slumping forward a little as she reached with a shaky hand for her third glass of wine. She turned, finally noticing Rose. Roxanne's eyes went wide, big and red, puffy from tearing up, makeup smudged.

"Oh!" said Roxanne, her face twisting into a forced smile. Rose recoiled from the face. Before, Rose had felt such rage at Mother's Mask, but now, seeing Roxanne's dark lips curl like that, Rose felt like she might be sick.
"Sorry, baby, the onions I cut for the ole loaf must still be doing their thing." She waved her hand, laughing lightly as she downed her wine.

Rose was frozen in place, mouth open. She didn't know what to say. She had been about to tell Roxanne off, but in a moment, that plan had been shattered.

"You were crying," Rose said. She didn't mean for her words to sound like an accusation, but she didn't know how else to make her voice sound. Roxanne didn't seem to know what to do, either. Mom sat the glass down. This time, she didn't refill it.
"Yeah, I was," Roxanne said after a moment.
"Why?" Rose's voice, again, came accusatory without meaning to, but she was almost incredulous. She didn't know her mother could even feel things. Roxanne shrugged.
"Rough day," she said, like she hadn't thought about why she'd been crying herself.
"Do you..." Rose paused. She'd played therapist before, on her cat, but in truth, she was out of her league. "Do you want to talk about it?"

Roxanne looked surprised at Rose's words. She laughed, but the laugh that came from her wasn't a polite chuckle, it was a hearty guffaw, followed by a ruffle of Rose's hair. Rose felt so strange. She was finally getting the reacting she'd been craving, but now that she'd gotten it, it felt like she'd let a genie out of the bottle.

"You wouldn't want to hear this old lady talk about her shitty day, Rosie," said Roxanne, blowing air out with her cheeks. Still, she stared down at Rose with a curious look. "But if you want to make it better, you can apologize for what you said about the meatloaf."
"I'm sorry," Rose said, her words coming before she could think. "I didn't mean that, mother.

I've just been having a shitty day, myself, I think."
"Hey!" Roxanne prodded Rose in the chest playfully. "Don't swear just 'cause mom does, got it?"

Rose's mouth turned into a smile. A sly grin, and she prodded her mother right back.
"Let me guess. Do as I say, not as I do?"
"Yeah! You're gettin' it. Now, come into the den and tell me about your, uh. Dark magic non-rituals."

Rose wasn't sure what had just happened, but at that moment, she felt like a chasm had just snapped shut. She felt silly about her actions before, about reprimanding her mother so childishly. She watched Roxanne walk back into the dining room. She still hated the smell of wine that shrouded Roxanne like an aura, and she still hated that mask her mother wore, but Rose, for one fleeting second, also saw the person behind them.

"C'mon," Roxanne said, "I'll crack open the Scrabble."
"Coming, mom," Rose said, trotting to catch up.

vampires aren't real

FunkMcLovin *FunkMcLovin @ twitter*

Kanaya wiped the sweat from her brow. She wasn't much of a mechanic, let alone in the rain, let alone without any tools. Still, in spite of her lack of skill, she'd been trying to make her car start for the better part of an hour.

"God," she exclaimed in frustration as, once again, her car refused to turn over. She struck the wheel with her palm as though it would do anything.

Kanaya Maryam had been driving home from a late-night visit to a friend, a visit that had been absolutely wonderful, only to be capped by this heinous situation: being stuck in the middle of the woods, on the side of the road, in the dead of night, in the pouring rain. Thunder cracked, lightning illuminating the woods around Kanaya. She slumped in her seat.

Her phone had died long ago, sitting like a useless brick on her dashboard. This wasn't good. Kanaya couldn't very well sleep in her car, and there was nowhere within walking distance to hole up, especially not in the heels she was sporting. She couldn't be here in the morning when the Sun rose... Uneasy and dismayed, Kanaya leaned back in her seat as another peal of thunder lit up the road through the trees. This time, however... Kanaya saw something in the brief glow.

"Rooms to Let, 0.5 miles," read a signpost some ways down the road.

Kanaya sat bolt upright. Yes! The sign was old, made of crumbling wood, but the paint was fresh. She hoped the place would be open.

A half-mile didn't seem like a lot when driving, but walking was another story. Kanaya could see the place up the road, her umbrella protecting her from the rain from above. She didn't know if she was lucky for finding the place or unlucky for breaking down to begin with, but she chose the former for the sake of her resolve.

When Kanaya finally reached the door of the massive hotel, her heart was thudding. It was old-fashioned, a huge wooden building, spacious and foreboding. What's more, all the lights in the place were dim. Were they closed? Would she get an answer from knocking? On the porch, she tossed her umbrella aside, thudding on the oak entrance with her palms. She normally wouldn't have been nearly so rude nor imposing, but this was a desperate moment.

"Hello?" she called inside, cupping her mouth to be heard over the rain. "Please, I... I have money," she pleaded. She hadn't realized quite how desperate she was. A moment passed, no response. She lingered, that hair's breadth of hope keeping her from breaking down, when...

Creeeeak.
The door opened slowly, revealing a shadowed figure, shrouded in the black of the hotel's foyer.

"We are closed for the season, madamoiselle," came the slow, soft voice of the shadow. She stepped forth, her half-lidded eyes peering down at Kanaya, who had crumpled to her hands and knees. When the figure saw Kanaya's state, she knelt, suddenly.
"Mon dieu... My dear, what happened to you?"

The woman, a blonde, older lady festooned in a lavender-colored robe, wrapped an arm around Kanaya's shoulder, helping Kanaya inside. Her accent had a gentle French twinge, and her words folded gently in her mouth, like the woman was singing.
"Rose Lalonde," introduced the woman,

sitting Kanaya down in a chair. She felt Kanaya's forehead. "Madame, you are so cold! You must be so thirsty."
"You have no idea..." wheezed Kanaya. She didn't want to be rude, but the first thing Kanaya did was shove her shoes off, her feet aching from the brief but exhausting trek.

Miss Lalonde bustled into another room, switching on several lamps on her way. She returned with a glass of water.
"It is nearly 4 in the morning," said Rose sympathetically, kneeling next to Kanaya in her chair. "What could you have been doing out so early?"
"I was..." Kanaya caught her breath, looking at Rose's face for the first time. She blinked. It was absolutely gorgeous. Kanaya had never been struck dumb by beauty before, but Rose's face, from those plump lips to those pretty eyes, to the way her robe loosely hung from her shoulder, gave Kanaya Maryam pause. She realized she was staring and hastily continued.
"I was driving home, but my car broke down. Please..."Kanaya gripped the shoulder of Rose's robe. "I need a place to stay."
"Of course you can stay, my dear," said Rose solemnly. She even went so far as to soothingly stroke Kanaya's forehead. Kanaya breathed a sigh of relief. "Normally, we are a bed-and-breakfast, there are so many tourists here in the fall. Cider mills, fall leaves, but in the summertime, we close. Please, madame, choose any room you like."
Kanaya didn't know a stranger could be so kind. She sighed and stood, relief flowing over her.
"Thank you, Miss Lalonde," she breathed. Her gratitude was palpable in her every syllable. "My name is Kanaya Maryam."
"Well, Madame Maryam," Rose giggled, squeezing Kanaya's arm. Her laugh was easy and cheerful, feminine and sweet. "First thing tomorrow, we call the tow truck. For now... You look exhausted."

Kanaya chose the first room she was led to sleep in. There was a bed inside it, and that was all she cared about. Once she was within, she shut the door and fell face-down on the bed. The downy fluff was ever so welcome after the harsh rain. She heard Rose traipsing down the hallway to her own room.

Kanaya disrobed, leaving on only her white undershirt and a pair of loose briefs. This, too, was comforting. Perhaps they weren't the driest, but it beat laying around in her damp clothes and sleeping in her car.

Thoughts of Rose swam in her head. Kanaya was a sucker for older ladies, and, apparently, especially a sucker for this one. She sighed, covering her face with a pillow, amazed at herself that, not moments ago, she was fearing for her life in the woods, and now she'd switched gears so quickly to start thinking about women. Typical. She'd just visited her friend Vriska, and Vriska's words played in her head.
"Girl, you're too thirsty!"
Kanaya chuckled. She'd have to tell Vriska she'd gotten home safely when she called the tow company tomorrow, too.

Vriska was right in two ways, as well, for Kanaya WAS thirsty. She'd forgotten to swig the water that Rose had procured for her back in the foyer. She wondered if it was still out there.

Kanaya opened the door to her room to grab the glass. She wouldn't be able to sleep with a parched throat, after all. She crept quietly towards the foyer to grab the water, passing the room Rose was snoozing in. She hoped she wasn't being loud enough to disturb her gracious host.

Once she acquired the agua, she happily downed it. Oh yes, that was the stuff. She thought it tasted especially good, maybe all these years she'd taken the plain beverage for granted in favor of other ones.

However, Kanaya's relief was short-lived. For down the hall she heard a thud. She tensed, suddenly alert. After all, she was in a stranger's house. She swallowed, resisting the urge to speak up, her breath hitching as she slowly crept towards her room.

As she passed Rose's door... It was open. Had Rose left her own room? Kanaya's eyes widened as she looked further down the hall. Her own door, too, was ajar. Her mind raced. This wasn't good. Was Rose invading her room? Kanaya was positive she'd closed the door behind her. God, she felt so stupid, she'd trusted that old French woman so easily!

Kanaya, clutching the empty water glass in her hand, opened the door to her room with a creak. Inside, Rose was there, shrouded in shadow, leaned over Kanaya's bed! Kanaya gasped audibly, causing Rose to turn on her heel, shouting with surprise.
Something cold hit Kanaya in the chest and she yelped, her shirt ice-chilly, Rose's surprised face still clear on her.
"What did you do?!" Kanaya cried, clutching her shirt in horror. Had she been stabbed? What was Rose doing? Panic flooded Kanaya's mind until she realized, slowly.
"I'm sorry, Madame Maryam," said Rose breathlessly. "I saw you didn't drink your water, so I got you another glass."
The cold liquid was just water, tossed from the glass when Rose had been so shocked. Kanaya sighed, running a hand through her hair, laughing sheepishly.
"My apologies, Miss Lalonde," she laughed. It seemed so silly. "I thought you were some kind of vampire!"
The two shared a laugh, and Rose moved to leave.
"A vampire," she chuckled. "You're reading too many gothic stories, Madame, vampires are not real." Rose patted Kanaya on the shoulder. As she walked out, something crunched. Kanaya looked down, her eyes widening for the second time that night.

During the kerfuffle, Kanaya had dropped her glass, which had shattered on the ground. A shard of glass cut the bottom of Rose's foot. She hissed.
"Oh, goodness—my apologies. Don't worry, Kanaya, it's not so bad, I'll grab myself a bandage." Rose leaned on the door, inspecting the damage. She looked at Kanaya, noting Miss Maryam's look of alarm.
"Vampires," Kanaya whispered, her eyes locked onto Rose's bloody heel. From beneath her top lip, two sharp teeth suddenly protruded. It was Rose's turn to be wide-eyed.
"Mon dieu!" Rose cried, stumbling back. Kanaya's eyes were blood red, her fangs bared at her hostess. Rose's face twisted into horror. "You're... You are a monster!"

Rose dashed out of the room, down the hall, ignoring the pain in her foot. Her heart hammered, her breath coming in quick, shallow gasps, adrenaline pumping in her veins. Kanaya's nostrils flared, savoring the scent of fresh blood.

Kanaya gave chase as Rose fled. Rose called out behind her, her robe trailing, shoving furniture into Kanaya's path. None of it did any good, Kanaya was alarmingly agile, leaping over every vase, every end table, gaining on Rose. Rose trotted up the stairs and Kanaya seemed to glide after effortlessly, fangs glistening in the night.

"Please, don't—!" Rose begged, panting, skidding to a halt in front of a large, ornate window. She backed up against it, fear in her eyes as Kanaya advanced, cornering Rose between her body and the massive window. The moon shone into it behind Rose, revealing Kanaya's face.
Kanaya seemed to be twisted now, fangs and eyes, ears growing to a point, her features a monstrous mockery of her former self. No less beautiful, but far more terrifying.

"If I am to be punished by my own hospitality..." Rose hastily whispered as Kanaya closed the gap, leaning on the window, her hand on the side of Rose's head. The glass creaked under their weight. "...then may I be welcomed into the kingdom of Heaven with no regrets!"

Rose squeezed her eyes shut, waiting for her throat to be torn out, waiting to become food for her guest. She squeaked when Kanaya's other hand pressed against the glass, trapping Rose between her arms.

The moment never came, though. Kanaya's fangs did not pierce Rose's skin.

Rose opened her eyes, peeking at Kanaya, who was looking down at her, not with anger or desperation, but pleading.
"Miss Lalonde..." she breathed. "I mean you no harm."
Rose's heart thudded, one part nerves, one part terror.
"You... You don't?"
"No, I... I'm sorry you had to see my fangs. I hope you do not think I am a monster," Kanaya said, her voice surprisingly even.
"I..." Rose hesitated. She felt foolish, now, for running. More foolish still for calling Kanaya names. "I thought vampires drank blood. You aren't going to drain me, Miss Maryam?"

Kanaya's face was still vampiric. She spoke from behind her fangs, looking down with blood rred eyes, but her voice was still human.
"Only if you allow me to," said Kanaya, softly. The way she spoke those words made Rose's stomach flip. It was so surprisingly intimate; Kanaya asked it with such a hopefulness to her voice.
"Will it hurt?" Rose asked softly. It was a silly question, but it was the only one she could think to ask. Kanaya's fingers touched Rose's neck and Rose shivered.
"Just two pricks," breathed Kanaya, leaning in, lips parting.

That autumn, the Lalonde Manor Hotel saw the best business it had in decades. It had been passed down for generations, so Rose was proud to see her mother's estate such a bustling, welcome place for guests. Part of the new appeal, of course, was Rose's wife, Kanaya, who had been quietly added to the staff over the off-season.

"She's pretty!" said one guest, an old woman who was a regular to the hotel, marveling at Rose's new wedding ring.
"We'd all thought you'd be a spinster for life, Miss Lalonde!"
Rose chuckled, playfully swatting the old woman on the arm, pulling her ring finger back.
"You're one to talk, Madame Cecily," Rose replied with a kind, sly smile. Miss Cecily laughed, reaching out to prod at Rose's neck.
"You poor thing, did you take a fall over the summer?"
Rose hastily adjusted her collar. Two round, thin scars sat just above her collar bone. She blushed.
"These? Oh, yes, just an accident with a... a poker. You know," Rose smiled sheepishly. "One of those pokers with two prongs. They use them for cooking!"
Miss Cecily raised an eyebrow, but before she could express skepticism, Rose hastily spoke.
"Ah, there's my poker now! I mean. My wife."

Rose trotted away, hurrying to link her arms with Kanaya as they walked outside, into the garden.
Miss Cecily watched them, leaning over to her husband.
"You know, Harold. They make a cute couple, but there's something so unwholesome about gardening at night..."

odysseus under the old tree

FineSpecimenRetrieved *kitkatemunch @ twitter*

The lights are back again.

Kanaya Maryam watches the outside with bated breath, uncaring of the ink slowly pooling from her abandoned quill, an imperfect blotch of black staining the curved letters she had carefully penned. An absentminded part of her is furious at her moment of distraction, but the glistening lights from beyond continue to catch her attention, an ancient siren's song luring her into the dark depths. Her gaze strays upwards, hazy eyes focusing on the night outside, an eternal darkness that has kept this forsaken town under its cool watch for centuries. It is all the townsfolk have ever known, the Innkeeper whispered softly to her one night, and she learns that despite their quiet worship of the night, the moment the lights begin to rise, they hurry off into shelter, boarding their doors and windows, waiting for it to pass.

Kanaya learned to follow.

These lights are not stars. Stars do not drift gently through the air towards the lagging stragglers. Stars do not whisper ancient words of forgotten secrets. Stars do not slowly envelop you into an embrace of void, wrapping you up in nothingness.

Kanaya stares down at her ashen arm, the sickly grey of her limb a stark

contrast to the usual warm brown she's used to. She had not believed the villagers several nights after she had arrived, instead disregarding their harried warnings to disappear into shelter when the lights descended. She could still remember the burning coldness of the light creeping up her fingers, spilling down over her knuckles and to her wrist. By the time she had finally pulled away, it had slithered up to her elbow.

She had been so wrong, and paid for it. The 'Berührung', as the villagers called it, had consumed most of her right arm, casting it into a permanent frigid numbness, the grey leeching into anything it seems to touch. Normally, she keeps it bandaged, but when the lights arrive... it begins to ache, strongly and desperately. Covering it only makes it worse.

Kanaya is out of her depth, and she is well aware of this fact. She is a seamstress by trade, and had only come to this hidden village chasing after rumours of the finest silk a person could have. How could she have known that she would stumble into something so much greater than her? Ever since she passed through that gnarled gate, everything is different, so very different to what she is used to. A quiet part of her wonders if she's tripped into another world entirely.

She should have left the moment she found out where the silk was harvested from. She learned of the creatures that haunted this place, of the 'Sanftflügel', giant moths that were not named for the gentle silk their hair provided, but for the quietness with which they appeared and stole children.

She should have left.

And yet... she lingered. Her bags have been packed for several cycles, but she could still not bring herself to leave. Before, it had been out of a horrified curiosity, but since being caught by the 'Berührung', the thought of departing physically pains her. Kanaya wonders if she's been imprisoned into a desperate delirium by the lights, if their touch has cursed her to be bound to this night forever; if the tendrils that creep closer in her dreams are her chains, if the

whispers in her ears the soft croon of her jailor, if the feather light touch drawing patterns into her skin is a brand. Her dreams haunt her with a black lipped smile, blinding tendrils warming her soul and calling out for her to finally join them, join her.
Once upon a time, Kanaya had feared the dark. Now, she fears what monsters the light might bring.

Her arm twitches suddenly, jolting her out of the hazy trance she had fallen into once again, hypnotised by the memory of lights. She swallows, looks up—

And realises she's no longer in her room, sitting at the rickety old desk she had penned her notes on. Rather, Kanaya finds herself standing by the large window that her hosts had covered up with thick drapes and curtains. A remnant of a time long gone, they had told her, wrinkled white hands reaching out to touch her shoulder, voice full of warning that she should never give in to her curiosity and remove it. But here she stands, ashen arm lifted upwards, cold fingertips brushing against the silken fabric like a lover's touch.

The shock of it forces her to flinch back, but her hand writhes, clawing desperately at the drapes she had foolishly disturbed. Her jolt allows her hand to catch the curtain, and her eyes fix on it in horror as she watches it fall away.

Thousands of miniature eyes watch her, each burning like the gleaming sun she hasn't seen in so long. Bubbling light pours through the window, carving sharp edges against the darkness, and through the blinding brightness, her eyes trace a figure on the window. It's a young woman, covered in ancient eyes that seem to follow Kanaya's every movement, and she swears she sees black painted lips curve into a smile, as wispy tendrils reach out to-

Something cold slithers around Kanaya's wrist, and her eyes dart down. An inky black tendril wraps itself in her cursed hand, squeezing the numb flesh gently, tenderly, before it continues upwards. Her mouth falls open, and she does not know whether it is to scream or cry or beg- but something smooth falls upon her cheeks, feather light fingertips tracing along her jaw, before they gently close her mouth.

Brilliant white eyes stare at Kanaya from every angle, tears made of ink seeming to ooze from the sides, and she spots a face the same grey as her right arm, the lips that have haunted her dreams curled up into a satisfied smile. The being in front of her opens her mouth, and garbled static falls from a blackened tongue. The tendrils writhe at the sound, shadow spilling gleefully from the garb the being is robed in. Her face must convey her confusion, her fear, and the being leans closer, hands holding her face tenderly.

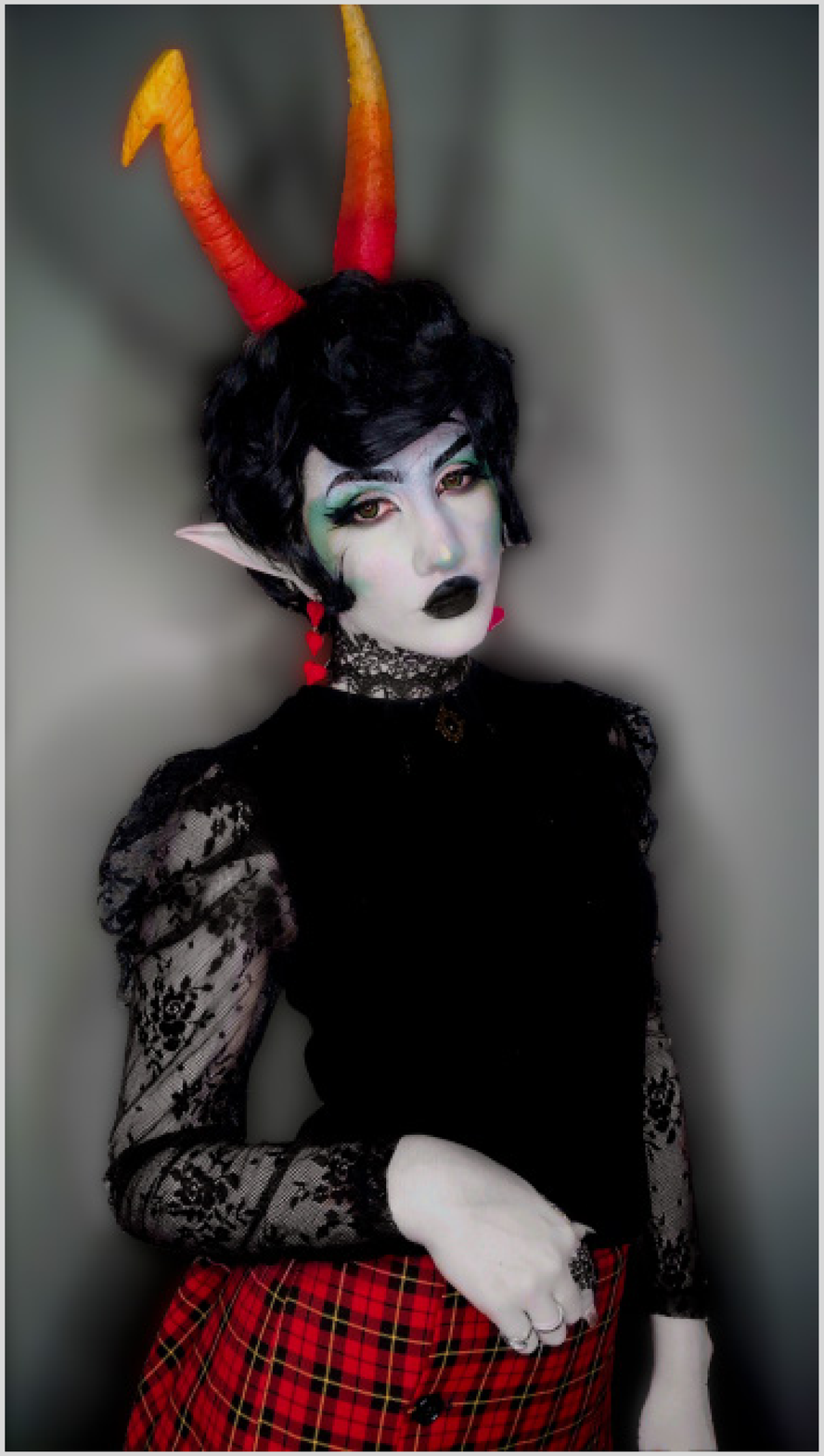
She kisses her, lips cold against her own, and Kanaya feels the same numbness from her arm spread across her face, her body. She wants to resist, but before she even can, the woman pulls away, and speaks again.

"Hello, my dear moon. Will you not give your sun a break?" She hisses, voice crackling like the sound of water against stone, cold and silver and smooth.
Somehow, it feels like coming home.

"Who...?" Slips out of her mouth as her mind sluggishly tries to catch up to everything that is happening. A laugh rings out, like a church bell tolling in the night, and the sound causes goosebumps to rise on her flesh. The hand on her face is cold, colder than anything Kanaya has ever felt, and the pads of the woman's fingers seem to sear into her skin, branding her with her touch, and she shudders.
"Oh dearest," the being before her coos, tendrils reaching closer in a mockery of an embrace. "Play not coy with me."

Kanaya tries to take a step back, but the grip on her face is strong, and the shadow surrounding them writhes and slithers, shackling her body and keeping her still. The woman laughs again, and it echoes through the concrete, ringing over and over in Kanaya's mind, until all that remains is laughter and darkness, decorated with eyes that burn like stars.

The Abyss looks at Kanaya, and consumes her whole.







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